

Message Text

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20

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /126 W

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R 050500Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4698

INFO AMAVBASSY BEIRUT 4148

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8549

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IR IZ

SUBJ: ROCKY ROAD FOR IRANIAN-IRAQI RELATIONS

REF: TEHRAN 7584

SUMMARY: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS RAISE DOUBTS RE PROSPECTS FOR
IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN TEHRAN AND BAGHDAD. END SUMMARY.

1. MFA UNDERSECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AND ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS JAFAR NADIM TOLD DCM DECEMBER 3 THAT MFA HAD RECEIVED
A NOTE FROM IRAQI EMBASSY IN TEHRAN RAISING MOST SERIOUS
DOUBTS RE IRAQI GOOD FAITH IN SEEKING TO RESTORE DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND ESTABLISHING RESIDENT AMBASSADORS
IN EACH CAPITAL. NOTE HAD REFERRED TO IRANIAN CITY OF
KHORRAMSHAHR BY ANCIENT ARABIC NAME OF MUHAMMAREH AND
PROTESTED USE OF SHATT-AL-ARAB RIVER BY IRANIAN WARSHIPS.
NADIM SAID IRAN PROPOSED TO DELIVER COPIES OF OFFENDING NOTE
TO ARAB EMBASSIES IN TEHRAN AND RETURN THE NOTE ITSEC
UNANSWERED TO IRAQI EMBASSY. ON DECEMBER 5 WHAT HAD TRANS-
PIRED WAS TO BE FEATURED IN IRANIAN PRESS. A HINT OF THIS
RENEWED STRAIN APPEARED IN DECEMBER 4 PRESS WHICH PROTESTED
RECENT BAGHDAD TELEVISION PROGRAMS ALLEGEDLY CLAIMING
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KHORRAMSHAHR PROPERLY TO BE IRAQI TERRITORY AND DENOUNCING

IRANIAN TAKE-OVER OF GULF ISLANDS.

2. DURING DECEMBER 4 CONVERSATION AT MFA, POLCOUN WAS TOLD BY DG FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS (ASIA AND AFRICA) SANANDAJI THAT NOTE HAD BEEN RETURNED UNANSWERED TO IRAQI EMBASSY AS PLANNED. HOWEVER, IRAQI CHARGE KHALID SAMARRAI HAD PROTESTED WITH APPARENT SINCERITY THAT HE HAD BEEN UNDER NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS GOVERNMENT TO SEND THE NOTE AND THAT HIS TRANSLATOR HAD MISTRANSLATED KHORRAMSHAHR AND HAD OTHERWISE ACTED WITHOUT AUTHORITY. ALTHOUGH MFA IS OBVIOUSLY SKEPTICAL ABOUT SAMARRAI'S STORY, PLANS TO PUBLICIZE THE NOTE IN IRANIAN MEDIA HAVE BEEN SHELVED FOR THE TIME BEING. SANANDAJI PERSONALLY DOUBTS THAT IRAQ REALLY MEANS TO EXCHANGQGE AMBASSADORS WITH IRAN, RELATING THIS PRIMARILY TO THE BAGHDAD REGIME'S CONTINUING UNSETTLED PROBLEMS WITH THE KURDS. IN ANY CASE, IRAN WOULD NOT SEND AN AMBASSADOR TO BAGHDAD UNTIL AN IRAQI AMBASSANOR HAD FIRST ARRIVED IN TEHRAN.

3. COMMENT: THIS LATEST EPISODE IN THE UNHAPPY RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ HELPS TO CONFIRM THE VIEWS OF MANY OBSERVERS HERE THAT IN SPITE OF IRAQ'S INITIATIVE IN THE BEGINNING OF THE OCTOBER WAR TO RESTORE RELATIONS WITH IRAN, ANY REAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS IS UNLIKELY TO OCCUR. END COMMENT.
HELMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TEHRAN08549
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731242/aaaabfay.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TEHRAN 7584
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26-Dec-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <10-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROCKY ROAD FOR IRANIAN-IRAQI RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, IR, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005